



Community Gardens Toolkit



OVERVIEW

Defining Community Gardens

According to information contained in the Full Gardens organizations website (www.fullgardens.com), a community garden is a piece of land gardened by a group of people. Community gardens provide access to fresh produce and plants as well as to satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, a sense of community, and connection to the environment. They are publicly-functioning in terms of ownership, access and management, as well as typically owned in trust by local governments or nonprofits.

A city's community gardens can be as diverse as its communities of gardeners. Some choose to solely grow flowers, others are nurtured communally and their bounty shared, some have individual plots for personal use, while others are equipped with raised beds for disabled gardeners.



Community gardens encourage an urban community's food security, allowing people to grow their own food or to donate what they have grown. The gardens also combat two issues that plague modern urban life, by bringing gardeners closer in touch with a sustainable source for food, and by creating a social community by reducing isolation. Active communities have been shown to experience less crime and vandalism.

Houston's Urban Harvest supports more than 100 community gardens in the Houston area. Its website, found at <http://www.urbanharvest.org/cgardens/types.html>, lists the following types of gardens:

1. Donation gardens where crops are grown and the produce is donated to local food pantries.
2. School gardens provide a hands-on learning laboratory for school children.

3. Neighborhood or allotment gardens are found in neighborhood parks and vacant lots.
4. Therapy gardens provide an opportunity for physical, emotional and spiritual health and healing.
5. Market gardens provide a source of income for low-income residents as well as entrepreneurs, who sell their produce to local individuals, restaurants, retailers and farmers markets.

NOTE: With allotment gardens residents typically rent their portion of a community garden, while community residents share equally in the labor and in harvests in neighborhood gardens.



The HDHHS Community Gardens Program

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services has developed a network of community gardens. The community gardens program grew out of its efforts to teach people the importance of proper nutrition and exercise in preventing and managing chronic disease.

In 2009, Hurricane Ike recovery funding allowed HDHHS to initiate its first



gardens with funding to teach proper nutrition as well as to create gardens as 'demonstration labs'. Participants were able to share in harvested crops as well as use knowledge gained in growing their own vegetables.

With the knowledge of proper gardening community members are able to plant and harvest their own crops. Vegetables can be grown in raised beds, in the ground or in containers. HDHHS gardens are made up of either one or two-tiered raised-beds. The program has been designed to accomplish some specific goals, including:

1. Promote healthy eating to reduce obesity and the effects of chronic disease
2. Promote physical activity through gardening to improve cardio vascular function
3. Promote the importance of socialization in overall wellness
4. Teach the fundamentals of gardening
5. Cultivate partnerships to promote community and personal gardening



Growing with HDHHS Community Gardens



The program has expanded from its first community garden at the Southwest Multi-Service Center to 11 gardens throughout the city. Those gardens host garden clubs that are open to anyone willing to join and actively participate in preparing beds, planting crops, watering, maintaining and harvesting.



The benefits of garden club membership include:

- A. Learning how to prepare, plant and tend a vegetable garden;
- B. Having an opportunity to exercise through walking and pruning the garden;
- C. Getting to meet new people thereby expanding their social network; and
- D. Sharing in the crops that are harvested.

People interested in joining an HDHHS Garden Club may do so by calling or visiting the contact listed for the multi-service center community garden of their choice. Members must abide by the Garden Club rules found at the end of this section.

HDHHS Garden Locations

Fifth Ward



The Peavy Center Community Garden is maintained primarily by 5th Ward area seniors, participants in the NCI Senior Program and community youth including the 5th Ward Enrichment Program, 5th Ward Head Start Program, Yes Prep Academy and Southwest Key. The garden has six raised beds. In June 2012, the Peavy Community Garden received the Community Partnership Award. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
5th Ward/ Peavy Center	3814 Market St.	Rhonda Thomas	832-393-3803

Kashmere Gardens

The Kashmere Community Garden has provided gardening and socialization opportunities in Kashmere Gardens since 2010. The garden promotes a sense of sustainability by fostering community involvement and teaching community members to grow their own vegetables and herbs. The garden has six beds and is maintained by community members, NCI Kashmere seniors, and the Community Re-Entry Network.



Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Kashmere MSC	4802 Lockwood Dr.	Lakeisha West	832-393-5503

Northeast



The Northeast Community Garden has provided organic gardening opportunities since 2010. With six raised beds, the garden is easily accessible for people who are mobility impaired. Club members are responsible for watering, maintaining and sharing in the garden's harvests. Additional members are needed to assist with the up-keep of the garden and share in the harvests.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Northeast MSC	9720 Spaulding.	Sharisa Daniel	713-449-7933

Denver Harbor



With six raised beds, the Denver Harbor Community Garden has been a source for fresh produce and social interaction for the east end community since 2010. Community garden club members assist in maintaining the garden and share in weeding, watering and harvesting produce from it. Harvested crops have included collard and mustard greens, broccoli, lettuce and tomatoes. While there is a dedicated group of that tend the garden, more are needed.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Denver Harbor MSC	6402 Market	Jesse Rodriguez	713-670-2144

Park Place



The garden at Park Place has been in existence since 2010. Gardeners have planted and harvested mustard greens, eggplants, and various species of peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, fragrant mints, herbs, broccoli and cauliflower. Volunteers currently involved in watering, weeding and harvesting are fostering a new bond between the community and its health department. Please call for more information or to

join our club.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Park Place	7611 Park Place	Daisy James	832-393-5637

Sunnyside

The Sunnyside Community Garden is the largest of the HDHHS gardens. It has 10 raised beds, fruit trees and large planters. Seniors from the YWCA Program, community volunteers and



Harris County Juvenile Probation clients help with upkeep and maintenance of the garden. Harvested fruits and vegetables are distributed among garden club members. If you are interested in joining our club, please call for more details.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Sunnyside MSC	4605 Wilmington St.	Carol McClung	713 527-4036

Third Ward



The Third Ward community garden began as a fountain and four flower beds included in the original multi-service center design. Ultimately, the fountain was disconnected, the beds were cleaned out and new soil was brought in to establish a garden. Seniors attending the center's senior program embraced the garden and have been instrumental in its growth. Please give us a call

if you are interested in joining our club.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Third Ward MSC	3611 Ennis St.	Britney Scott	713-527-4041

Hiram Clarke

The Hiram Clarke Community Garden was established in 2010. It has four beds, one of which is dedicated as a children's bed. The NCI Head-Start program partners with other gardeners to get the children involved. Volunteers have brought their own fruit trees to plant and beautify the garden. This collaborative has helped to empower community residents and strengthen community pride in the Hiram Clarke community. Please call us if you are interested in joining the club.



Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Hiram Clarke MSC	3610 West Fuqua St.	Monica Franklin	832-393-3803

North Stadium



The North Stadium Community Garden was established in 2010 to serve as a teaching/training garden for other HDHHS community gardens. It has seven beds and ample space for traditional garden crops as well as experimental soils and vegetable/herb varieties. The garden is easily accessible for people who are mobility impaired. The garden is tended by 10 HDHHS volunteers. Garden club members are always needed to assist with planting, watering, weeding, harvesting, and general area

cleanup.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
North Stadium	8000 N. Stadium Dr	Roy Villarreal	832-393-4869

Southwest

The Southwest Multi-Service Center Community Garden was established in 2009. It was the first health department community garden to be built. The garden has six beds and six fruit trees, including pomegranate, fig, lemon, orange and grapefruit. It is tended by a dedicated group of volunteers and more are needed. The garden has served as a model for other gardens and was recently highlighted in the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) Journal as a great collaboration among government and community. Please call to join our club or get more information.



Location	Address	Contact	Phone
Southwest MSC	6400 High Star St.	Sandra Rodriguez	281-610-5237

West End



The West End Multi-Service Center Community Garden was established in 2009 to serve as a teaching/training site for promoting healthy eating in the West End/ Heights Community. The garden has five beds and volunteers assist in planting, tending and harvesting. Located in front of Good Neighbor Clinic, the garden has produced an abundant harvest since it was established. During the

2012 Spring Fling it earned first place as garden of the year. Volunteers are needed and welcome. Please contact us for more information.

Location	Address	Contact	Phone
West End MSC	170 Heights Blvd	Sopheak Pen	713-803-1050

How Green Did Our Gardens Grow?

Pounds of Produce Harvested by Month From HDHHS Gardens

	3rd Ward	Denver Harbor	Sunnyside	Kashmere	Northeast	Peavy	Southwest	Hiram Clark	West End	Park Place	Stadium	Monthly Totals
Dec-11	Not Captured	89.25	375.25	57.00	42.00	-	99.00	230.00		-	-	892.50
Jan-12		99.00	63.50	81.50	141.00	109.25	70.00	86.25	146.50	210.00	85.00	1,092.00
Feb-12		172.00	-	64.00	140.00	37.50	50.00	45.00	25.50	130.00	174.00	838.00
Mar-12		-	28.50	-	-	21.00	9.00	16.50	14.50	102.75	-	192.25
Apr-12		27.00	53.00	40.00	47.50	43.75	30.00	64.00	56.00	30.75	18.75	410.75
May-12		179.00	337.50	102.50	1,133.00	98.50	161.00	137.50	270.70	278.25	59.50	2,757.45
Jun-12		11.00	260.25	74.00	149.25	36.25	93.00	40.00	226.50	74.50	69.50	1,034.25
Jul-12		15.00	148.00	-	60.00	56.00	28.00	28.75	61.00	108.00	15.50	520.25
Aug-12		19.50	115.00	7.50	98.75	-	44.00	21.00	3.00	97.00	55.50	461.25
Sep-12		65.50		12.25	86.00	-	23.00	5.00		69.00	2.00	262.75
Oct-12						-	2.00			7.50		9.50
Nov-12												-
Garden Totals		677.25	1,381.00	438.75	1,897.50	402.25	609.00	674.00	803.70	1,107.75	479.75	8,470.95



Joining an HDHHS Community Garden

It's easy to join a Houston Department of Health and Human Services garden club.

Additional benefits of joining a garden club:

1. Gardeners are taught the fundamentals of gardening, including:
 - The different types of gardens such as container, in-ground and raised bed (which are the standard for all HDHHS gardens).
 - What type of garden is best choice for gardeners who want to grow vegetables at home
 - The benefits of composting and organic gardening
 - Controlling garden insects naturally
 - Proper watering and nutrients in the garden
 - How to plant vegetables and fruit trees.
 - What crops grow best in Houston and when to plant them by season?
2. Gardeners are taught the nutritional value of certain vegetables and how they contribute to improved health, including:
 - The health benefit of the food you are planting
 - How daily diet affects our health
 - Preparing a balanced meal
 - Preparing garden foods to get the maximum nutritional benefit from them
3. Gardening provides an opportunity for club members to meet new people and expand their social network. Members have an opportunity to:
 - Socialize and share growing tips, ideas and recipes with other gardeners.
 - Celebrate seasons and share seeds and plants.
4. Gardening is an opportunity to exercise. Members share in:
 - Planting vegetables and fruit trees
 - Monitoring vegetation-eating bugs and other harmful garden pests
 - Weeding and pruning crops
 - Watering the gardens as scheduled
 - Harvesting
 - Gardeners also have an opportunity to join other ongoing activities at the multi-service center.
5. Because they share in the labor, garden club members are able to add seasonal fresh vegetables to the other foods they cook.

HDHHS Community Gardens Program Rules and Regulations

There are no fees associated with the garden clubs sponsored by HDHHS. The following rules are enforced:

1. Participants must register at the garden of their choice. Gardeners can be registered at only one HDHHS garden.
2. Active gardening reflects four seasons. Club members are required to contribute 10 hours per month to their garden. They may assist in winterization, filling the raised beds, planting, weeding, maintaining and harvesting at their garden. Club members that are physically unable to assist in gardening tasks will be assigned other duties.
3. Planting and harvesting times are established by HDHHS. Members are not allowed to harvest produce from the gardens at their own discretion. Garden participants that do not adhere to the harvesting schedule may be suspended from participation in the club.
4. The HDHHS community garden program is an organic gardening program. Use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides made from synthetic materials as well as chemical fertilizers are not permitted. Club members may not bring their own natural fertilizers for use in HDHHS gardens except as approved by the Garden Coordinator.
5. Club members will share equally in each harvest. They will be notified by their garden representative when each harvest will occur.
6. Club members are responsible for helping keep walk and pathways clear of debris.
7. If a garden club member witnesses vandalism or theft, he or she will report it to the garden coordinator. At no time should a club member attempt to stop the person.
8. Smoking and alcohol consumption are not permitted on City of Houston property.
9. Club member behavior must reflect well on HDHHS and the community. Members engaged in unacceptable behavior will be asked to leave the property and club membership will be revoked.
10. While input may be sought from club members, produce to be planted will be coordinated by HDHHS.



Building Your Own Garden

Before planting your own garden, consider these important factors.

1. Where should you plant your garden?

- Although morning sun is best, gardens should be planted so that they can get full sun during some part of the day.
- A source for water should be close by. Watering can is done with either a hose or a watering can. Soil should always be moist, but not soggy.

2. How much space do you have for your garden? Gardens do not have to be very large.



- If you are in a second story apartment with a balcony but no yard space, then a container garden on the balcony might work for you. Containers could include flowerpots, buckets, or other chemical-free containers with drainage, capable of holding plants.

- You might look at planting vegetables in existing flowerbeds. Before planting edible foods in a flowerbed be certain there are no harmful chemicals in the soil. Soil around older wooden homes may contain lead from peeling paint.



- If you have yard space, are capable and don't mind digging your garden you might consider a traditional in-ground garden sized just right for you to maintain.

- If you have yard space but are not sure of the condition of the soil or suspect that it might contain undesirable chemicals, or you have difficulty standing for long periods of time, then you might consider a raised-bed garden where you would bring in the soil that you need. Cinder blocks capped with pavers make an excellent bench for sitting while working in the garden.



3. Am I physically able to tend an in-ground garden? If the answer to that question is no, you might want to consider a raised-bed garden. The advantages of raised bed gardens include:

- The beds are built over existing grass with a layer of paper or cardboard between the grass and the soil you will use in your garden so you don't have to dig up rocky soil.
- Soil brought in for raised beds are less likely to have contaminants which could be filtered into the plants growing in the garden.



- A two-tiered raised bed garden will allow the gardener with limited mobility to sit as needed while planting, pruning, weeding and harvesting. Another advantage of a raised-bed garden is there is less chance to overwater as excess water will escape

through the cinder block joints.

4. How do I get the soil ready for my garden? Whether you are planting in containers, in the ground, or in raised beds you will need to prepare the soil for your garden. Things you will need:

- If you are planting in containers a good start will be to gather suitable containers and buy organic soil from a retail home and garden store or soil company. Most retail outlets routinely sell soil in bags that are ideal for container gardens.
- If you are planting in the ground you will need the following things on hand to get your garden ready:

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ Digging fork | ✓ Rake | ✓ Mulch |
| ✓ Shovel | ✓ Compost | ✓ Aged manure/organic fertilizer |

- If you are planting in raised beds you will need to purchase materials including soils for planting. You will need to calculate how much soil, and how many cinder blocks and



cap stones you will need based on the number and size of the beds to you will be planting. It is more economical to buy garden soil by the yard (from a company that sells unpackaged dirt by the yard or half yard) for raised bed gardens. You choose the size and how many beds you will plant. A raised bed garden diagram follows. Things on hand should include:

- ✓ Digging fork
- ✓ Soil
- ✓ Cinder blocks
- ✓ Mulch
- ✓ Compost
- ✓ Capstones
- ✓ Shovel
- ✓ Aged manure or Organic fertilizer
- ✓ Newspaper or cardboard

Examples of two-tiered raised garden bed sizes and needed supplies

(Examples are based on using 8X8X16 Cinder Blocks and 2X8X16 Cap Stones)

Bed Sizes			# Cinder Blocks	# Cap Stones	Yards of soil
5'-4"	10'-8"		48	24	2
	Bed				
5'-4"	16'-0"		64	32	3
	Bed				
5'-4"	20'-0"		76	36	4
	Bed				
5'-4"	25'-4"		92	46	5
	Bed				



What to Plant and When to Plant It

Plant your crops by season. There are two growing seasons for our area, Fall and Spring. Use the charts below, provided by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, in deciding what to plant and in what season. Growing times are also listed.

Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County												
Texas AgriLife Extension Service 3033 Bear Creek Dr, Houston, TX 77084 281.855.5600 • http://harris-tx.tamu.edu												
FACT SHEET												
	Marginal Planting Time			Ideal Planting Time								
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
ASPARAGUS, Crowns												
BEANS, Lima & Snap Bush												
BEANS, Lima & Snap Pole												
BEEFS												
BROCCOLI, Plants												
CABBAGE, Plants												
CAULIFLOWER, Plants												
CARROTS												
CHARD, Swiss												
CHINESE CABBAGE												
COLLARDS												
CORN												
CUCUMBER												
EGGPLANTS, Plants												
KOHLRABI, Plants												
LETTUCE												
MUSKMELON, Cantalope												
MUSTARD												
OKRA												
ONION, Bulb-type setes												
ONION, Transplant for scallions												
ONION, Multipliers												
PARSLEY												
PEAS, English & Snap												
PEAS, Southern												
PEPPER, Plants												
POTATO, Irish												
POTATO, Sweet												
PUMPKIN												
RADISH												
SPINACH												
SQUASH, Summer												
SQUASH, Winter												
TOMATO, Plants												
TURNIP												
WATERMELON												

Typical Number of Days until Harvest



FACT SHEET

Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Harris County
3033 Bear Creek Drive, Houston, Texas 77084
281.855.5600 • <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>

Vegetable Varieties for Harris County

BEANS

BUSH

Dwf Fr. Tendergreen	55
Jade	60
Contender	55
Florence	50
Derby	57

POLE

Purple King	75
Northeaster	56
Rattlesnake	73

LIMA (BUTTERBEAN)

Fordhook	67
Henderson	65
Jackson Bush	65
Florida Butter	67
Sieva (Carolina)	80

BEETS

Chioggia	54
Detroit Red	56
Pacemaker III	50

BROCCOLI

Bonanza	55
Gypsy	58
Packman	53
Early Divided	45

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Tasty Nugget	78
Diablo	110

CABBAGE

Early Jersey Wakefield	62
Point One	48
Sombrero	67
Ruby Perfection	75

CHINESE CABBAGE

Joi Choi	50
Pac Choi	50
Brisk Green	50

CANTALOUPE

Caravelle	82
Ambrosia	86
Mainstream	90
Magnum 45	80

CARROTS

Danver 126	75
Scarlet Nantes	70
Bolero	78
Vita Sweet	69

CAULIFLOWER

Snow Crown	68
Majestic	66
Brocoverde (Cauli-Broc)	68
Violet Queen (Purple)	64
Alverda (Green)	75

CHARD

Bright Yellow	50
Bright Lights	55
Fordhook	50
Rhubarb	59
Onea	48

COLLARDS

Georgia	75
Champion	62
Flash	55

CORN

SWEET

Silver Queen (White)	91
Merit (Yellow)	75
Bonanza (Yellow)	82
SUGAR ENHANCED	
Funk's G-90 (Bicolor)	90
Kandy Korn (Yellow)	89
Tendertreat (Yellow)	95

SUPER SWEET

How Sweet It Is (W)	87
Crisp n Sweet (Y)	85
Honey n Pearl (Bi)	78
Summer Sweet 8102(Bi)	81
Summer Sweet 7630 (Y)	84
Florida Staysweet (Y)	85

TRIPLE SWEET

Honey Select	79
Serendipity	82

CUCUMBERS

PICKLING

Calypso	52
Carolina	49
H-19 Little Leaf	55

CUCUMBERS cont'

SLICING

Diva	58
Spacemaster	56
Suyo	61
Sweet Slice	62
Sweet Success	55

EGGPLANT

Purple Rain	66
Ichiban	61
Pingtung long	65
Neon	65
Fairy Tale	50

GARLIC

Elephant	
Mexican Purple	
Texas White	
New York White	

KALE

Nero di Toscana	50
Dwarf Blue Curled	55
Rebor	50
Vates	55

KOHLRABI

Grand Duke	45
Purple Danube	40
Early White Vienna	55

LEEKS

King Richard	75
American Flag	130

LETTUCE - Head

None Recommended

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

LETTUCE - Leaf**BIBB**

Buttercrunch	75
Esmeralda	55

ROMAINE

Little Caesar	70
Freckles	55
Giant Caesar	70
Plato II	53

RED

Redina	55
Red Fire	48
Vulcan	52
Red Sails	52

OAK LEAF

Brunia (Red)	50
Salad Bowl	49

MUSTARD

Florida Broadleaf	40
Savannah	35
Southern Giant Curled	48

OKRA

Clemson Spineless	55
Cajun Delight	49
Emerald	58
Louisiana Green Velvet	55
Silver Queen	50

ONION**BULBING**

Grano 1015Y	
Granex (Wh, R, Y)	
Grano 502	
Burgundy	

BUNCHING

Beltsville Bunching	
Crystal Wax	
Southport White	

PARSLEY

Italian Greenleaf	72
Pagoda	75
Triple Curl	75

PEAS**SOUTHERN**

Blackeye #5	60
Mississippi Silver	65
Purple Hull	65
Texas Pinkeye	60
Zipper Cream	66

ENGLISH

Little Marvel	63
Wanda	65

SNAP

Cascadia	58
Sugar Ann	58

Sugar Bon	56
Sugar Snap	64

PEPPER**SWEET BELL**

Big Bertha	70
Blushing Beauty	72
Jackpot	75
Lilac	70
Golden Summer	65
Gypsy	65
Super Heavy Weight	

PEPPER**SWEET OTHER**

Banana Supreme	65
Giant Marconi	
La Parie	65
Senorita (Jalapeno)	60
Vera Cruz	65

HOT

Anaheim	77
Grande	80
Jalero	75
Mexibell	75
Mucho Nacho	75
Santa Fe Grande	75
Super Cayenne	70
TAM Mild Jalapeno #1	70
TAM Hildago Serrano	70

POTATOES**IRISH & NEW**

Red Pontiac (Red)	80
Red Lasota (Red)	80
Irish Cobbler (White)	80
Russian Banana	90
(Fingerling)	

SWEET

Beauregard	150
Centennial	150
Jewel	150

RADISH

Champion	20
Cherry Belle	22
Easter Egg	25
French Breakfast	25
White Icicle	30

SPINACH

Bloomsdale	45
Melody	53
Tyee	53
Space	40

SUMMER SQUASH**YELLOW**

Early Yellow Crookneck	42
Dixie	45

Goldbar	43
Horn of Plenty	41
Sundance	52
Sundance Yellow	47

ZUCCHINI

Ambassador	51
Gold Rush	52
Magda	45
President	49

NOVELTY

Peter Pan	50
Sunburst	50
Trombone	55

WINTER SQUASH

Acorn types	75
Buttercup types	100
Butternut types	90
Spaghetti types	100
Sweet Mama	85

TOMATO**CHERRY**

Jolly	70
Juliet	60
Sun Gold	65
Sweet 100	60
Sweet Chelsea	65

PASTE

Roma	78
Viva Italia	72

STANDARD

Better Boy	70
Beefmaster	80
Bush Celebrity	70
Celebrity	70
Champion	70
Early Girl	52
Heatwave	68

TURNIPS

Purple Top White Globe	57
Royal Globe	45
Shogoin	42
Tokyo Cross	35
White Lady	40

WATERMELON

Crimson Tide	84
Golden Crown	80
Jubilee	95
Mickylee	70
Minilee	68
Sugar Baby	75
Yellow Doll	68

Planting Your Garden

Once your garden is prepared and you have decided what you will plant it's time to get your starter plants or seeds in the ground or containers. If you have ever soaked dry beans in water before cooking them you know that they absorb water and expand. This same soaking action is useful in helping seeds sprout more quickly. If you plan to plant on a Tuesday, soak your seeds on a Monday. Never soak the seeds for more than one day and don't let seeds that have been soaked dry out again. Things to consider when planting to help your plants grow well:



Spacing seeds or starter plants is very important to their future growth. They should be spaced far enough apart for them to grow without being crowded. Seeds planted too close together may be thinned later as they begin to sprout and grow into plants. 'Running' plants need more space. Always follow seed packet or plant stake instructions.

Planting your seed at the right depth is important as well. Seeds planted too deeply may not sprout while seeds not planted deeply enough may develop with weak root systems.



Watering your garden is essential to its growth. Check your garden daily to make sure that the soil does not dry out. The soil should be moist, not soggy. Water your garden with a hose and attachment set to shower, or from a watering can. Do not use high pressure for watering as the force of the water can damage or even destroy your plants.

Fertilizing your plants is just as important to their health as eating the right foods is to yours. Plants need the right nutrients to grow properly. A good organic fertilizer is recommended. Suggestions include compost, aged manure, fish emulsion or a reliable brand of organic fertilizer. Whichever you choose, make sure that you follow the label directions. Plants should be fed on the day that you plant them and again every three to four weeks.



Gardening 101 What's to Learn?

Why Garden? People who enjoy gardening do it for various reasons. While gardening has proved to be a wonderful learning laboratory for children, in many countries it is



done out of necessity to provide food for the family. Some people find it relaxing, while others like to share what they grow. Whatever the reason may be, gardening is a cost-effective way to

save money by growing your own fruits and vegetables. The idea of growing, harvesting and consuming your own produce is not new. It has always been a meaningful alternative source to having healthy food.

In Gardening 101 you can have your questions answered as well as learn:

- Getting the most out of your garden space
- When to plant certain vegetables
- The difference in raised beds versus conventional in-ground gardens.
- Natural control of insects and other pests.
- Identifying plant diseases.
- How and when to water.
- Spacing seeds and plants in your garden
- Identifying the best areas to plant a garden
- Container gardening
- Fruit trees that thrive in this Houston.



Gardening is a great opportunity for people of all ages to get outside and exercise while developing life skills. We hope that you find the class an enlightening and worthwhile experience. Check with your multi- service center for a class or visit us online at <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Community/gardenprogram.html>

Your Garden's Health

10 Simple Gardening Tips

1. Never water your garden in the heat of the day, from 11am to 5pm.
2. Try to water your garden early in the morning, from 6am to 9am.
3. Water plants at the base. Stay away from watering the leaves because tap water contains chlorine, which can damage the plants leaves.
4. Do not over-water the garden.
5. Use 3 to 4 inches of mulch per bed to maintain moisture in the soil. Mulch provides nutrients and prevents weed growth.
6. Vegetable transplants are better suited for early evening planting during the spring and summer season when temperatures are not too hot.
7. Incorporate natural (organic) fertilizer and pest repellents.
8. Do not plant seeds too deep.
9. Use cages and trestles to support vegetables such as tomatoes and beans.
10. Keep a chart on what was planted in each bed so that crops can be rotated each year.

Partnering for Success

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services has a long history of collaborating with other agencies to collectively address public health issues. It now brings that same spirit of collaboration to the table in addressing food security needs within the city. In addition to cultivating teaching gardens within its own properties, the department provides consultation to other organizations that wish to implement community gardens as well as those that wish to assist HDHHS in maintaining its gardens. Current and past collaborative partners include the following:

Almeda & Harvest UMC	Kashmere Gardens Elem School
Attucks Middle School	Islamic Relief USA
Beechnut Academy	Kings Row Apartments
Better Business Bureau	Kids Village Program
Blue Ridge United Methodist Church	Kipp Spirit Academy
Change Happens	Shrine of the Black Madonna - Marcus Garden
Community Reentry Network	Palm Center Our Town
Creston Missionary Baptist	Park Place Reveille Civic Club
Eagle Trace Retirement Home	Plant It Forward
Fifth Ward Redevelopment Corp	Pleasant Hill Church
Fifth Ward Enrichment Program	Recipe For Success
Finnegan Park	Settegast Heights Village Apartments
Girl Scouts of America	Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance
Grace Community Services	Target Hunger
Gulf Coast Community Services Assn	Texas Agri-Life
Houston Food Bank	Texas Youth Commission
Houston Grand Opera	Urban Harvest
Houston Hispanic Coalition	Windsor Village United Methodist Church
Houston Public Library	Women Infants and Children's Program
Independence Heights Community Garden	Yes Prep Academy
Katy Prairie Foundation	

HDHHS Community Gardens staff is available to provide information and consultation on building, planting and sustaining community gardens please call 832-393- 4795 for more information.

